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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the sixty-third session

Commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor)

Letter dated 12 August 2008 from the representatives of the Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to inform you that this year is the last in the biennial commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933 in Ukraine.

Therefore, and in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we have the honour to request the inclusion in the agenda of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor)", with subsequent consideration of the item directly at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

It should be noted that, in a spirit of compromise, the delegation of Ukraine took into account with appreciation the suggestions of several delegations concerned to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, as well as a proposal regarding the commemoration of the memory of other nationalities who died of starvation in the former Soviet Union.

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly an explanatory memorandum is attached herewith (see annex).

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We would appreciate it if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(*Signed*) Petr **Kaiser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Czech Republic to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Helen **Kaljuläte**
Chargé d'affaires a.i of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Klavs **Sniedze**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Republic of Latvia to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Ridas **Petkus**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Lithuania to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Pawel **Herczyński**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations

(*Signed*) Viktor **Kryzhanivskyi**
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Ukraine to the United Nations

Annex

Explanatory memorandum

Between 1932 and 1933, millions of people in the former Soviet Union died of mass starvation.

In Ukraine that famine became known as Holodomor (killing by hunger) as it resulted from deliberate homicidal political decisions of the totalitarian Stalin regime.

Honouring the seventy-fifth anniversary of the tragedy, Ukraine also commemorates the memory of millions of Russians, Kazakhs and representatives of other nationalities who died of starvation in the Volga River region, Northern Caucasus, Kazakhstan and other parts of the former Soviet Union, as a result of disastrous attempts at agricultural collectivization and nationalization.

In 2003 a joint statement on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of Holodomor was circulated as a document of the General Assembly and became an important milestone in the promotion of international awareness about the famine. In the statement, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, Holodomor was officially recognized as the national tragedy of the Ukrainian people, caused by the cruel actions and policies of the totalitarian regime. The document also encouraged research and dissemination of information about the events of 1932-1933 in order for that knowledge to "strengthen effectiveness of the rule of law and enhance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms".

On 28 November 2006 the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine passed a bill, condemning the artificially made Great Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933 in Ukraine.

Signing the bill into law, the President of Ukraine, Victor Yushchenko, welcomed the historic decision by Ukrainian lawmakers as one that aimed at restoring Ukraine's national dignity and historical justice, and appealed for worldwide support for Ukraine's efforts to honour the victims of Holodomor.

Ukraine has released Holodomor records from the ex-KGB archives that uncovered the purposes and mechanisms of the realization of the policy which resulted in the death of millions of its people.

Holodomor has become an object of research in many countries. In less than five years abundant archival materials have been published in Great Britain, Italy, France and other States.

All those findings show that specifically in the Ukrainian case famine had a deliberate and organized nature.

Through the implementation of repressive measures, among them:

(a) Imposition of excessive grain procurement quotas;

(b) Confiscation of everything that was good for food;

(c) Prohibition on trade in foodstuffs;

(d) Deployment of internal and border troops to keep the starving people from travelling to other regions of the USSR in search of food;

the Ukrainian population appeared in a ghetto, where it was not possible to survive.

For Ukraine it is important to encourage further worldwide research into the policies that brought about mass starvation and death of people in Ukraine and in other regions of the former Soviet Union in order to better understand the nature of the tragedy caused by the totalitarian regime.

Ukraine does not want to settle scores with the past, which cannot be changed. Our goal is to restore the dignity and to honour the memory of millions of our compatriots who were outrageously deprived of their sacred lives. International awareness about Holodomor is knowledge that can and must be used to avoid the repetition of similar tragedies in future.